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U. S. Department of Agriculture

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Housekeepers' Chat

Tuesday, April 23, 1929

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Materials for Window Curtains."

Bulletin available: "Principles of Window Curtaining." May be purchased for 10 cents from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

--ooOoo--

"Dear Aunt Sammy," writes a radio friend. "Do you have any bulletins on interior decorating? I am planning to buy new curtains for the house this summer, and I should appreciate any advice you can give me."

In answer to this question, I will say that there is an attractive bulletin called "Principles of Window Curtaining," which contains loads of advice about curtains -- I can't think of a single item which has been omitted. This bulletin has been so popular that the free supply is exhausted, but you may buy it, for 10 cents, from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Let me give you a word of advice, if you have never bought curtain material. Get a sample of the material, and try it against the wall, and against your upholstery and wood work, by daylight and by lamplight, before you buy. Notice also the effect of light shining through it.

In selecting the color, or colors, to be used in the draperies, consider walls, floors, woodwork, and all the furnishings of the room. If you want figured curtains, choose a material with a background the same color as the walls, but slightly darker. The principal color in the design of the curtain material should repeat the color of the rug, or upholstery. In any color scheme, black, grey, silver, or gold may be used as braid on curtains, or in cushions, lamp shades, book-ends, vases, and other accessories.

Don't forget that the color scheme of the curtains should be planned with the whole house in mind. The strongest colors, in adjacent rooms, should harmonize. I know a man who threatened to leave home because his wife insisted on having a rose and blue living room, a green hall, and an orange dining room.

There is one very good curtain material not mentioned in the curtain bulletin, and that material is osnaburg. You have heard me talk about it a number of times. Osnaburg is a cotton material with a heavy weave, not so close as that of unbleached muslin, and the yarns are not so uniform in size. This unevenness makes the material most attractive. Osnaburg is heavy enough for draperies or draw curtains, and can also be made into slip covers, pillows, table scarfs, and so forth. Since osnaburg is a plain fabric without design, it can be trimmed with colored stitching, applique, bias fold tape, and folds or bands of cretonne.

Here's another question which came in the mail yesterday: "Will you please suggest some curtain materials which are appropriate for a boy's room?"

So far as possible, the likes and dislikes and general interests of the various members of the family should be considered in selecting their bedroom curtains, unless the same kind is used throughout the house. For the boy, avoid fluffy ruffles and dainty colors. He needs strong colors and simple lines. Burlap, denim, crash, or sateen in strong values -- green, brown, blue, or oranges, should please him. Osnaburg is appropriate for a boy's room. These materials may be hung from a painted pole, without a valance. If cretonne is used, select vigorous patterns.

The young daughter's room can be made to express the opposite spirit, though the character of her room depends somewhat on her interests. She may enjoy ruffles and dainty colors, or she may be a hearty out-of-doors girl who enjoys the same things as her brother. If this is the case, she, too, will want strong colors, straight lines, and vigorous patterns. For dainty curtains, dyed cheesecloth, dotted swiss, organdie, voile, marquisette, or net is pleasing. They may be white, if the woodwork is white, or they may repeat the principal color used in the room. These materials may be used alone, or with a valance and side draperies of cretonne, taffeta, poplin, or glazed chintz. An interesting effect is obtained by hanging two layers of organdie or voile of different color over each other. A blue organdy, hung over a rose organdy, will make the color effect mauve, and blue over yellow will create a green effect. Instead of the material for tie-backs, big wooden beads strung on colored cord are effective.

Since there is such a wealth of material in the curtain bulletin, I shall spend no more time today on this fascinating subject. Remember that the curtain bulletin may be purchased for 10 cents, from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

Now let's write the menu: Corn Pudding; Poke Shoots; French Fried Onions; and Rhubarb Sauce. You'll find recipes for Corn Pudding and Fried Onions in the Radio Cookbook. Corn Pudding you'll find on page 17, and Fried Onions on page 18.

There is nothing in the cookbook, however, about poke shoots.

Do you have poke shoots, or poke salad in your locality? Perhaps as a child you made "ink" from the dark purple berries of the poke weed, and stained your hands and clothes, and were told by your parents that the poke weed berries were poisonous. It is true that the berries of the poke weed are poisonous, and should never be tasted or eaten. However, the tender pink and green shoots of the poke weed that come up in the spring contain none of this poisonous matter, and are highly prized for greens. Some people call them "poor man's asparagus." They do have the same kind of succulent texture, and fresh flavor. You may be able to find the poke weed growing wild in a nearby field, or perhaps in a corner of your garden. In cutting the shoots, you will find the small pink ones best, but you may also take the tips of the half-grown stalks. Don't use the larger green leaves. They are bitter. In

cutting the shoots, take care not to include any of the underground part of the plant, for the root is exceedingly poisonous. Also, be sure that you are cutting the true poke weed. There is one variety, sometimes called Indian poke, which is poisonous in all its parts.

If poke weed does not grow wild in your locality, perhaps marsh marigold, or cowslip, does. That makes the best of all greens, some people think. Others prefer lamb's quarter, or wild dandelion. You may have in your garden an abundance of turnip or mustard tops, young beet greens, kale, spinach, or perhaps so much lettuce that you can use it for cooked greens. Try the poke shoots, however, if they are available.

I'll tell you how to cook the poke shoots. They have a slightly pungent or bitter flavor, which is disliked if too strong. The best thing to do, therefore, is to cook them for three or four minutes in boiling water, as you would any other vegetable, and then drain them, and put them on to cook again in fresh boiling water, lightly salted. Young poke shoots are fairly uniform in size, and are handled more easily, if they are tied together in a bundle, like asparagus. Season them simply with butter.

If you use mustard, turnip, lamb's quarter, marsh marigold, or beet tops, instead of poke, chop them up fine, and cook the shortest possible time, in a very little water. A hard-cooked egg may be used to give a decorative note, and add to the food value.

If you have no wild greens, perhaps you have lettuce. Shred the lettuce, stir it up with melted butter in a heavy skillet, cover, let it steam and cook slowly for 4 to 10 minutes, and sprinkle lightly with salt before serving. Romaine lettuce is especially good for cooking, because it holds its shape, and does not wilt down so completely as the softer kinds of garden lettuce.

The Menu again: Corn Pudding; Poke Shoots; French Fried Onions; and Rhubarb Sauce.

Wednesday: "The Value of Fish in the Diet."

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